



153 East St., Suite 400
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February 21, 2017

Re: HB-07027 CSDE - ECS - Equitable funding in education.

Dear Chairwoman Walker, Chairwoman Osten, Chairman Formica, Ranking Member Ziobron and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Teachers are used to making do. They make do with whatever resources are available; they make do with whatever we have just to make sure our students get by. They stretch their checks to supplement whatever their students can afford with whatever they can afford.

And though it's a proud tradition of providing for our students, it's always done with a sense of sadness because teachers know that our students' access to achievement should not be tethered to their teacher's ability to purchase supplies each week. But the need for funding reform goes well beyond classroom supplies.

On behalf of E4E-Connecticut's membership -- who collectively decided to take on the issue of funding reform -- I urge you to give serious consideration to the fair and equitable appropriation to our neediest districts while supporting our wealthier districts in transition, and place our state on the path to repairing this funding system that leaves too many low-income and disadvantaged communities behind.

The Governor's budget, as it relates to education, considers poverty, enrollment and a municipality's ability to pay when distributing funds. We believe this is a much needed first step on the long path towards ensuring we are making good on our obligation to provide for our students, not just make do.

In recent years, we have created a system of brutally evident haves and have nots. Our existing system, reliant as it is on multiple overlapping funding formulas, remains capricious and unpredictable for the cities and towns that are most in need.

Holding shrinking districts harmless, while initially an essential provision to ensure stability to municipalities, has forced city and state officials to ignore the evolving needs of schools and concentrate on an increasingly arbitrary allocation from year to year. As a state, in service of ensuring

predictability for some districts, we've tied our own hands when it comes to meeting today's needs.

I represent the voices of hundreds of in-classroom teachers from district across the state who have had enough of watching their students' needs take a backseat to those of more affluent communities. We are ready for funding reform that makes it possible for every student, in every community -- whether high, middle or working class -- to succeed. Our teachers believe that such a system must consolidate the existing funding formulas to provide a predictable funding stream for the communities in our state that need it most.

We support the Governor's rallying cry to ensure all our students are equitably educated; to increase state education grants in cities and towns with struggling schools; to create flexibility in the Minimum Budget Requirement, and to consider poverty, need, and enrollment in funding decisions with the goal of ensuring a student's' success isn't dependent on their zip code.

Our teachers take pride in helping their students make do, but we also believe our students deserve more than an education that'll do. We believe every student deserves an education that will set them up for success beyond their family's income, beyond their race, beyond their teacher's ability to supplement them, and beyond the classroom. We urge you to consider every students' needs in this budget and help ensure every classroom, in every corner of this great state, can rise together.

Thank you,

Dr. Justin Boucher
Executive Director
Educators For Excellence - Connecticut